

## Stop Wasting Money! Reduce Spend Without Reducing Overall Performance of Your PPC Campaigns

Are you spending money somewhere in your PPC campaign that isn't yielding good profits for you? These days' it's imperative for marketers to be as efficient as possible with their marketing budgets. Here are 7 areas you should focus your efforts when reducing your PPC campaign spend, but not its performance. These techniques can be implemented fairly easily, and are highly effective at getting the most bang for your marketing investment buck.

### 1. TRIM THE FAT ON YOUR PPC CAMPAIGN

The hard work with PPC budget reduction is that you don't want to just lower your daily budget on the search engines, lower bids across the board, or do other sweeping things that will also cut your lead flow by the same percentage that it reduces your spend.

Some campaigns are highly optimized, making fat trimming more difficult, but most campaigns are wasting a portion of spend on audiences that will never convert. Now is the time to refine your campaign to ensure that you pay only for relevant traffic.

### 2. ADD NEGATIVE KEYWORDS

Run Google search query reports to see what actual search terms are driving your traffic (and costing you money). If you are using broad match at all, chances are there will be some irrelevant terms in there. Add these irrelevant terms as negative keywords in Google, Yahoo! and Bing.

Are you seeing a lot of lines like "108 other unique search queries?" Most analytics programs will show you a list of the search queries that brought traffic to your site, and you can supplement Google's data with these reports.

Don't just focus on reducing unwanted clicks, also trim out irrelevant impressions. Why do this when you are only paying for clicks? Because it will actually reduce your costs. Google has put more and more emphasis on its quality score algorithm, and one major element of a keyword's quality score is the click-through rate. If adding negative keywords removes 20% of your impressions on a keyword (those that were so irrelevant they weren't generating any clicks), that would increase your click-through rate by 20%. The corresponding increase in quality score should increase your average position or decrease your cost per click.



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## 3. REFINE AD COPY

Stop wasting money paying for clicks from people who will never fill out a lead form. Many companies default to exciting ad copy that is focused on grabbing attention and generating clicks. In a tighter economy, ads need to be targeted to attract only relevant traffic.

Make your ads specific, and make sure they accurately represent your company. Often it makes sense to use your ads to actively qualify prospects.

## 4. ADD DAYPARTING

Another good way to reduce spend without reducing overall performance is to daypart – turning your ads off entirely at times of the day that don't deliver quality traffic. Google allows you to pause campaigns at certain times, and also to selectively lower bids. Turning your campaign off entirely on the weekends might be overkill, but automatically reducing bids 50% on weekends might give you a similar number of qualified leads with less cost.

## 5. TEST ALL MAJOR CHANGES TO YOUR WEBSITE

Not all site changes increase conversion rates. Some companies redesign their sites to have a better look and feel, but then see a decrease in conversion rate despite positive feedback about the design. Even landing page best practices don't work in every instance.

There are many great testing platforms out there, and some, like Google Website Optimizer, are even free. It is relatively simple and painless to test everything but minor changes to your site.

If you launch a new landing page, A/B test it against the one you were previously using. If you are making several individual changes to a landing page, home page, or any page on your site that affects your PPC campaign, consider using a multivariate test to see which variables have the most impact and which combination is the best.

A word of warning: these tests can quickly add up to dozens of possible combinations. If you have a low lead flow, these tests can take months to accumulate statistically significant data. Be sure to limit your variants to a level that your traffic can support, and consider sticking with A/B testing if you usually see less than 100 leads a month.



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## 6. TRACK PAST ONLINE CONVERSIONS

If you are not tracking your PPC campaigns all the way through to sale, you won't know which keywords or even which campaigns or search engines are generating the leads that are turning into sales.

This data takes a while to accumulate, since you must wait until leads make it all the way through your sales cycle. If you have a long sales cycle or low lead volume, it can take many months before you have any statistically significant data.

Work now to integrate your PPC (and SEO) data into your CRM system so you can have solid ROI numbers for each of your online campaigns—before you need those numbers.

Once you get enough data, you can start optimizing your campaign toward activities that are generating revenue rather than leads that go nowhere.

## 7. KEEP AN EYE ON THE COMPETITION

Stay aware of what your competitors are doing, but don't imitate them. Your strategy, analysis, and data might be stronger than theirs. When watching competitors, get an idea of their sophistication level by looking at their tracking system and tracking syntax, keyword coverage (on both relevant and irrelevant keywords), ad copy, and landing pages.



### ABOUT APOGEE RESULTS:

Apogee Results is a leading online marketing agency that develops and manages customized search engine optimization, paid search, and website effectiveness consulting programs for B2B and B2C clients. Apogee Results uses proven techniques, powerful web analytics tools, and a deep expertise in statistical evaluation to generate solid, measurable results at every stage of the search marketing process.

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